

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Cheryl Morgan Spencer
612-302-3100

The Brown Power Base Project

BROWN POWER PROJECT ORGANIZES SEGREGATION TOUR IN RESPONSE TO SUPREME COURT DECISION ON SCHOOL DESEGREGATION

On Tuesday, July 17th, 2007, The Brown Power Base Project will take interested Minnesotans on an unusual Summer Tour. Knowledgeable guides and a rented bus will take participants on a tour of some of the most segregated school districts in the state of Minnesota. The Segregation Tour 2007 is being organized by The Brown Power Base Project in direct response to the June 28th, 2007 ruling by the United States Supreme Court that invalidates voluntary school desegregation plans. The Segregation Tour is being organized to draw attention to racially isolated school districts and the need for continued desegregation planning for these public school districts in the state of Minnesota.

The Brown Power Base Project, started in January 2007, and funded by The Minnesota Dream Fund is a collaboration of The Minneapolis Urban League, The Institute on Race & Poverty, Centro Campesino, HACER (Hispanic Advocacy & Community Empowerment through Research) African American Family Services and the Housing Preservation Project. The goal of the project is to dismantle segregation in the state of Minnesota through the development of a Brown Power Base of Parents, teachers, students and concerned citizens who are committed to educational equity.

Mona Langston, Policy Advocate for the Housing Preservation Project says; "As an affordable housing advocate, I can't think of a stronger connection to school segregation than housing. The lack of available affordable housing in certain school districts appears to be the largest contributor to segregation and as a result, the isolation of poor children and children of color continues. Segregated school districts are alive and well in MN, research by the Institute on Race and Poverty proves this. Although it may not be the same type of segregation we have experienced in the past, it is still the cause of social and cultural isolation, and it must be fixed. It benefits no one and causes a great deal of long term harm to society as a whole.

Jesus Torres, the lead organizer for Centro Campesino agrees and also says," Most people don't think of Minnesota as a state with segregated schools. Unfortunately, that's just not true. Latino students, African American students, and other students of color face the real consequences of this segregation. The Supreme Court decision is a decision against the education of these kids, and against the future of these communities. Their decision is another way of telling these kids that this system simply doesn't care about them or their education".

Myron Orfield, Executive Director of the Institute on Race & Poverty believes that desegregated school districts offer the best hope for equal access to positive educational outcomes for students of color. He states," While the decision in Parents Involved threw out two very good school desegregation plans, it will clearly allow the Twin Cities, which do virtually nothing about rapidly growing segregation, to do much more to counter segregation our in school districts".

Cheryl Morgan Spencer, Minneapolis Urban League representative states," What is progressive about legally sanctioned segregation in public schools in 2007? Our children have the right to the

same sterling education that white kids get in those carefully segregated & oh so much wealthier Minnesota school districts. They have a right to the same education; not a “separate but equal” education that somebody else decides is good enough for them. This decision is about race, class, gender and the continuing battle for Civil Rights in this country. No matter how many times the powers that be attempt to turn back the hands of time, we will continue to fight for equity in education. It’s a fight that our ancestors fought with their very lives and because we remember, it’s a fight that destiny demands that we win.”

The Segregation Tour 2007 will start at 10:00 AM on Tuesday July 17th, 2007 with a Press conference at the Minneapolis Urban League located at 2100 Plymouth Avenue North. At 11:00 AM, interested parties can board the Tour Bus for a visit to the Minneapolis, Richfield and Bloomington School District Offices or Parent Welcome Centers. Lunch is included in the Tour. The tour will last approximately 2 hours. Bus leaves from Minneapolis Urban League (2100 Plymouth Avenue North & returns to Minneapolis Urban League after the Tour). For more information or to RSVP for the Segregation Tour, call 612-302-3100 and ask for Cheryl Morgan Spencer or call Jesus Torres at 507-446-9599